

TREASURY DEPARTMENT
Washington

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FOR RELEASE MORNING NEWSPAPERS
Wednesday, January 28, 1948

Press Service
No. S-608

Nellie Tayloe Ross, Director of the Mint, announced today that arrangements had been made for the Mint Bureau's 156th annual "trial of the coins", with the Philadelphia Mint as the scene and February 11 as the date. The personnel of the "court" before which the trial is to be held will be the members of the Annual Assay Commission. Twelve members of the 1948 commission have just been appointed by President Truman. Three others are designated by statute.

Such a commission meets each February in Philadelphia to determine whether coins produced by the various Mints during the calendar year recently ended were of proper weight and fineness. The trial is conducted in accordance with provisions of law first laid down in 1792 at the suggestion of Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury. The Director of the Mint is required to be present.

Mrs. Ross will convene the commission the morning of February 11 for a two-day session. Named by the President as members are Howard M. Abbott, Hardesty Chemical Co., Inc., New York; Capt. O.H. Dodson, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington; E.M. Kaufman, 3914 Revere Drive, Toledo, Ohio; August C. Stenger, 3308 Hillen Road, Baltimore; Charles J. McGrath, 46 Columbia Road, Dorchester, Mass.; Mrs. Margaret M. Cobb, 36 Huron Street, Oakland Beach, R.I.; Thomas Dannaher, Manchester, Conn.; Mrs. Reeve Schley, Far Hills, N.J.; C.A. Young, Greenwood, S.C.; Richard J. Finnegan, Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago; Dr. Wilmer Souder, National Bureau of Standards, Washington; Mrs. Irvin Reid, 121 34th Street, Newport News, Va. The statutory members are Judge William H. Kirkpatrick of the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Preston Delano, Comptroller of the Currency, Washington; Joseph Buford, Assayer of the U.S. Assay Office, New York City.

Committees on counting, weighing and assaying will be named from the commission's members, and these will supervise the trial's procedures.

The first step in the trial is to open the pyx box, in which specimen coins are stored, and determine that the count of its contents is correct. Into the pyx box throughout the calendar year goes one specimen coin from each lot of 10,000 silver coins minted.

After the count is verified, sample coins are removed and weighed. Other coins are turned over to the committee on assaying for chemical tests to verify their silver content. Finally, a number of coins from each of the three Mints — Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco — will be melted together and the silver mass assayed.

Upon completion of its work the commission will prepare a formal report. The commission members receive no pay for their services, but their expenses are defrayed. Each member receives a bronze medal commemorating the trial.

The 1947 silver coin production of the Mints totaled 254,916,051 pieces with a total value of \$35,323,425.50.